DETACHED PAGES

I find a great danger in a too ready sympathy. It proposes in rapid succession divers paths, all leading to equally charming landscapes. In rapid succession the soul becomes enamored of that languid lush country which shelters only the soft, the flexible, and the voluptuous and produces it abundantly; then it waxes enthusiastic over the glare of a sandy dune where everything glitters.

*

FOB MARCEL D.

He taxes me with having badly economized my appeal to the emotions since I exhaust it in the beginning of the book,[12] so that I cease to stir as soon as I try to persuade. This is because I am addressing myself and wish to address myself to the head and not to the heart; this is because I do not seek to win over the reader's sympathy, which would risk becoming indulgence; and it is precisely because, as I am well aware, certain words springing from the heart would touch the reader more deeply than all these more or less specious reasonings — it is precisely for this reason that I have kept from using those words. Compare the device of the lawyer who tries to pass off his client's crime as one dictated by jealousy. I do not want any of that. I intend that this book should he written coldly, deliberately, and that this should be evident. Passion must have preceded it or at most be implied in it; but above all it must not serve as an excuse for the book. I do not want to move to pity with this book; I want to embarrass.

I do not feel any imperious attraction (toward this book). It is undeniable that I am writing it out of season and when I no longer need to write it. This is what I explained yesterday to Marcel, fearing that he might see in it some almost unhealthy obsession, an impossibility of getting my mind off this subject. But, on the other hand, the difficulty

comes rather from the fact that I must artificially revive a problem to which I have found (as far as I am concerned) a practical solution, so that, to tell the truth, it no longer bothers me.

• *

It is noteworthy that animal forms, as they become complicated, become less and less numerous. The remarkable success achieved with man is unique.

But immediately there is found in him, I mean in the heart of the species itself, all the differences he had left behind.

[12] Corydon. [A]